

PROVIDING GRANTS TO EXPAND INFRASTRUCTURE NECESSARY TO INCREASE AVAILABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5534) to establish a grant program whereby moneys collected from violations of the corporate average fuel economy program are used to expand infrastructure necessary to increase the availability of alternative fuels, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5534

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FUEL ECONOMY FUND AND ALTERNATIVE FUEL GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF FUND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the Treasury a Fuel Economy Fund (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the “Fund”) consisting of amounts transferred to the Fund under paragraph (2) and amounts credited to the Fund under paragraph (3).

(2) TRANSFER OF AMOUNTS.—For fiscal year 2007, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall, subject to the availability of funds provided in advance in appropriations Acts, transfer to the Fund an amount determined by the Secretary to be equal to the total amount deposited in the general fund of the Treasury in the preceding fiscal year from fines, penalties, and other moneys obtained through enforcement actions conducted pursuant to section 32912 of title 49, United States Code, including moneys obtained under consent decrees.

(3) INVESTMENT OF AMOUNTS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall invest in interest-bearing obligations of the United States such portion of the Fund as is not, in the Secretary’s judgment, required to meet current withdrawals. Such obligations shall be acquired and sold and interest on, and the proceeds from the sale or redemption of, such obligations shall be credited to the Fund in accordance with the requirements of section 9602 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(4) USE OF AMOUNTS IN THE FUND.—Amounts in the Fund shall be made available, subject to the availability of funds provided in advance in appropriations Acts, to the Secretary of Energy to carry out the grant program described in subsection (b).

(b) ALTERNATIVE FUELS EXPANSION GRANT PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Energy shall, through the Clean Cities Program of the Department of Energy, carry out a grant program to expand the availability to consumers of alternative fuels. A grant awarded under this section shall not exceed \$30,000.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—Any entity that is eligible for assistance through the Clean Cities Program may be eligible for a grant under this section, except that no large, vertically integrated oil company may be eligible for a grant under this section. No entity may be awarded grants totaling more than \$60,000 in any fiscal year.

(3) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—Grants provided under this section shall be used for the construction or expansion of infrastructure necessary to increase the availability to consumers of alternative fuels (as defined in section 32901(a)(1) of title 49, United States Code). Not more than 3 percent of grant funds may be used for administrative costs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Michigan (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, many thanks to the staff of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and Mr. BOUCHER as well, who helped and assisted along the way, and Mr. FOSSELLA from New York for helping put this legislation together. I can’t tell you how timely it is.

Every day, Americans must fill up their cars with gasoline that comes from some of the most unstable regions of the world. American dollars flow to dictators, despots, and committed enemies of the United States, Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Ahmadinejad of Iran and Obasanjo of Nigeria. However, we do have other options, and that is the exciting news.

Today, nearly 5 million Americans drive flex-fuel vehicles. These cars are capable of running on gasoline or renewable fuels, like E-85, which is 85 percent ethanol; and that number is growing.

Currently, Ford, General Motors and Daimler Chrysler are in the process of announcing that they would be soon producing 2 million flex-fuel vehicles annually. The fastest way to reduce our dependence on foreign oil is to make ethanol, the fuel that is grown right here in the United States, available to Americans all across the country.

Unfortunately, renewable-fuels infrastructure has not kept pace with the number of renewable-fueled cars on the road. Today, only 600 or so gasolines have E-85 pumps installed, consisting of less than 1 percent of all gas stations. In fact, only 34 States even have E-85 pumps available to the motoring public.

We have come up with a good solution for that, a kick-start, if you will, to the ethanol revolution that is about to take hold of America. Remember our choices are this, Madam Speaker: we can send that money to an Iranian ayatollah, or we can send our fuel money to an American farmer. Today, we start that process of allowing consumers to make a good choice and send it to an American farmer.

Each year, there are automobile companies who pay fines because they are not in compliance with CAFE standards in the United States, and those fines come to the general treasury.

What we have done is to take those CAFE fines, fines that they pay for not meeting fuel economy standards of the United States, and roll it over and allow small loans to independent gas station owners all across the country to install ethanol pumps.

We think that this can double the number of ethanol pumps next year and start to fuel the fire for private investment in ethanol all across the United States and meet a demand from 5 million current users and 2 million future units from Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors cars all across this great country.

The one thing that we have figured out in this whole process, there is a great researcher at Michigan State University, Dr. Bruce Dale, who believes that within 5 to 6 years with his continuing cellulosic research and other things, there can be an ethanol product at the pump for \$1.25 a gallon. \$1.25 a gallon.

That is an economy built entirely on the energy of the United States. We are going to build the refineries here that refine the ethanol product. We are going to transport that fuel to the pumps all across America and we are going to produce those cars right here in the United States.

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It is good for the environment. And it is good for reducing our demand on foreign oil.

Madam Speaker, I think this is long overdue. The science of this is so exciting. We are right on the edge of turning the corner, not only from corn-based, but from switch grass and other things. It is all right here. This is just part of that three-legged stool. It is the research and development.

It is the ability, as we passed not so long ago, the energy bill that gave incentives for more ethanol refineries all across the country of some 93, four being built in Michigan, being built all over the United States is starting to catch on.

The last leg of that stool to make this successful is distribution. And this is that kick-start that we so desperately need. Again, Madam Speaker, we think this is an important bill at an important time in our history. We can see the conflicts around the world, how it draws us in to some of the worst governments the world has to offer.

This is our chance in America to stand up for our American farmers, for our ingenuity, for our ability to produce clean burning fuel for the cars that we use in this wheeled economy of ours. We can move forward through innovation. This bill is that kick start that is so desperately needed to do it.

Madam Speaker, these grants will be for no more than \$30,000 to \$60,000 per business for the purpose of expanding the availability of alternative fuel infrastructure. There is no new program here. That is really important. We did not create a new program to do this. This is part of the Clean Cities Program. We just redirected their purpose a little bit.

Madam Speaker, there are no taxpayer dollars involved. All of the money involved is by the fines paid. In addition, Madam Speaker, in an e-mail received by the Congressional Budget Office dated July 19, 2006, it states that "this would not affect direct spending; in other words, it has no cost."

Madam Speaker, I urge the quick passage of this bill as we move to the next phase of how we operate our motor vehicles all across this great country, and how we reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GORDON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, even small efforts to improve the availability of E-85 fuel across the Nation is a step in the right direction for reducing our dependency on foreign oil. There are nearly 5 million vehicles on the road today capable of operating on E-85, a blend of 15 percent gasoline and 85 percent ethanol.

Yet there are currently only 600 gas stations with E-85 pumps available. That means less than 1 percent of gas stations offer consumers the opportunity to use this alternative fuel in their vehicles.

In 2004, CAFE penalties totaled nearly \$20 million. The legislation before us would divert these funds into a grant program for independent gas stations. These grants will be used to install pumps and other infrastructure necessary to dispense E-85.

Madam Speaker, while there is more work to be done on this matter, this legislation is a small step in the right direction. I urge its passage.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. ROGERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5534, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEES AT NASA'S MICHoud ASSEMBLY FACILITY

Mr. BOEHLERT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 892) recognizing the dedication of the employees at the National Aeronautics and Space Ad-

ministration's Michoud Assembly Facility, the "Michoud Hurricane Ride-Out Team", who risked their lives during Hurricane Katrina's assault on southeast Louisiana, and kept the generators and pumps running to protect the facilities and flight hardware, and whose dedication kept the Michoud Assembly Facility an island of dry land, which made it possible to resume External Tank production less than 5 weeks after the storm passed, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 892

Whereas the Michoud Assembly Facility plays a vital role in the United States manned space flight program, including production of the Shuttle External Tank, a vital component of the Shuttle program;

Whereas the 38 members of the "Michoud Hurricane Ride-Out Team" who stayed behind during Hurricane Katrina risked their lives in dedication to the space program and faced down one of the greatest natural disasters in this Nation's history, at great personal risk; and

Whereas, if not for the dedication of this team, the Michoud facility would have suffered a great loss of National Aeronautics and Space Administration assets and technology, which would have severely limited the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's mission: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives commends the dedication of the 38 members of the "Michoud Hurricane Ride-Out Team" who stayed behind at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Michoud Assembly Facility and protected vital program assets, which enabled the facility to resume production of the Shuttle External Tank within 5 weeks of Hurricane Katrina's landfall, including Ronald L. Adams, Jr. of New Orleans, LA, Joseph Charles Barrett of Metairie, LA, Donald K. Bollich of Metairie, LA, Frederick H. Castle of Bay Saint Louis, MS, Daniel Alvine Doell of Terrytown, LA, John Lee Fisher of Slidell, LA, James E. Ford II of Madisonville, LA, Stephen Lynn Francis of New Orleans, LA, Monroe Lewis Frazier Jr. of Harvey, LA, Ernest Graham of Picayune, MS, William Carl Hale III of Slidell, LA, Willie Frederick Henderson III of New Orleans, LA, Simmie Paul Herrin of Slidell, LA, Royal Kenneth Holland of New Orleans, LA, Guy Mitchell Jackson of Chalmette, LA, Ivory Jordan, Jr. of Lacombe, LA, Joe E. Kennedy of Pearl River, LA, Donald P. Leon Jr. of New Orleans, LA, Michael Wilson Moore of Metairie, LA, Daryl Ordes of Pearlinton, MS, Michael A. Parquet of Slidell, LA, John Melvin Pucheu of Waveland, MS, George Elson Rogers, Sr. of Kenner, LA, Steven L. Roshto Jr. of Slidell, LA, Alan J. Rovira of New Orleans, LA, Joan B. Savoy of Saint Bernard, LA, Vickie Ann Schmersahl of Slidell, LA, Patrick Shawn Shea of Mandeville, LA, Henry Peter Sissac Jr. of New Orleans, LA, Aline H. Sullwold of Picayune, MS, Steve Thompson of Huntsville, AL, Richard Leowen Treat of Picayune, MS, Stephen Avery Turner of Slidell, LA, Byran Dale Walker of Picayune, MS, Edward Perry Watts Jr. of Metairie, LA, Roland C. Williams of New Orleans, LA, Terry Michael Winchester of Slidell, LA, and Malcolm Wayne Wood of Picayune, MS.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHLERT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 892, as amended, the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOEHLERT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 892, as amended, which recognizes the dedicated employees of NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility, the Michoud Hurricane Ride-Out Team. Knowing full well the potential for disaster and the impending danger they faced as Hurricane Katrina bore down on the gulf coast, 38 dedicated and heroic individuals put themselves in harm's way to save the Michoud Assembly Facility which is of vital importance to our Nation's civil space program.

Located just 15 miles from New Orleans' French Quarter, this facility is where NASA constructs the space shuttle's external tanks. Before the shuttle, this facility was where NASA manufactured the gargantuan tanks on the Saturn rocket that took us to the moon, and in the future, NASA plans to use the facility to construct the rockets that will return us to the moon.

These brave 38 individuals risked life and limb to protect this valuable facility that ensures our Nation's preeminence in space. Facing 178 mile-per-hour winds that ripped large chunks of surrounding buildings clean off, the intrepid ride-out team kept to its motto, "not on our watch."

By keeping generators and water pumps running throughout the storm, they managed to prevent the facility from flooding and preserved important flight hardware that has kept the space program on track. Because of the ride-out team's efforts, the facility was up and running only 5 weeks after the storm had passed. All of us watched the drama unfolding on television.

After just 3 months, nearly all of the 2,000 employees had returned to the facility despite the fact that 600 of them had lost their own homes.

By saving the facility and returning it to operation as quickly as they did, they were able to get to work right away on the external tank modifications necessary for the second return to flight mission that took place successfully, I might proudly boast, this month.

Many of these individuals have rightly earned NASA's exceptional bravery medal from NASA Administrator Michael Griffin, but they are also worthy of the House's commendation as well.

So it is with a great deal of pride in these dedicated Federal employees, who had so much on the line, not just in their careers, but in their personal